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February 13, 2006

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Madam Secretary:

My name is Dr. Janet Guss, and I am writing as a longtime viewer and supporter of Manhattan Neighborhood Network, the Public Access network supported by Time-Warner and RCN Cable, under franchise agreements with the City of New York. I wish to comment on the FCC **'Notice of Proposed Rulemaking' 05-311** on video franchising.

Local control is critical to our communities, as it allows us to directly impact the media and telecommunication formats available to meet our the needs of our community. I also feel that maintaining local control over video franchising improves our community's ability to hold telecommunications' providers accountable to our needs. Removing local franchising takes away our power to ensure that these companies charge reasonable rates and offer us universal services.

I am deeply concerned about the impact of this rule change on Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) TV operations. PEG TV is one of the few remaining avenues for local involvement in televised media, and as such, this service significantly enhances the daily life of our community. The local control afforded by PEG TV gives our community the opportunity to be heard, without infringing on the voices of other communities, with differing concerns and perspectives, which together define the diversity of America.

Perhaps most importantly, PEG TV provides unique benefits to the elderly and infirmed, for whom traveling to local community and government events may not be feasible. Many of these residents rely on such programming to give them a sense of community involvement and engagement which would not be otherwise possible in their circumstances.

Our Nation truly functions at its best when our citizens feel our voices can be heard, and PEG TV provides the resources needed to share and engage these voices. Please continue to provide us with Public Access TV in Manhattan, by ruling to maintain local franchises. I am counting on the FCC to take this opportunity to show its support for our nation's citizens! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like additional comment or have any questions. I can be reached at the contacts above, and via e-mail at: JLL20@columbia.edu.

Thank you,

Janet L. Guss, Ph.D.